

Coalition of Michigan Organizations of Nursing – COMON

The Honorable Alma Wheeler-Smith
Anderson House Office Building, Room S-988
Lansing, MI 48909

November 30, 2009

Dear Representative Smith:

Regarding the Nurse Professional Fund Modernization and Michigan Nurses

I am writing as the Chair of the **Coalition of Michigan Organizations of Nursing (COMON)**, which represents 40 nursing organizations in Michigan (see list attached). Recently, I learned that you have considered the introduction of legislation to modernize the section of the Michigan Public Health Code pertinent to the Nurse Professional Fund (NPF), increasing the nurse licensure fee by \$6 annually, allocating that increase to the NPF, and revising the purposes for which those funds may be expended by the Michigan Department of Community Health. COMON thanks you for being an advocate for Michigan's nurses, and supports this legislation.

The cost of the NPF licensure increase to each licensed nurse is less than two cents (1.6¢) per day. COMON's member organizations see the importance of continuing and enhancing the benefits brought to nurses in this state through the Nurse Professional Fund:

- expansion of NPF nursing scholarships (both graduate and undergraduate) at a time when other sources have been eliminated and students have begun to withdraw from nursing education programs due to lack of funding;
- implementation of the strategic plan to address the nursing shortage in Michigan (a shortage that quickly will reappear as the economy improves), assuring that MDCH will convene and provide support for the 2010 Task Force on Nursing Practice;
- maintain and improve the statewide web-based Nurse Map data system (available in early 2010) to improve planning information for hospitals, communities, and policy-makers; and
- maintain the activities of the Office of the Chief Nurse Executive (OCNE), which has leveraged NPF funds to bring additional federal and foundation dollars to nursing in Michigan. The OCNE plays a role in each of the benefits listed above, serves as a unifying voice for Michigan nurses, and is an advocate for the future of nursing in a time of change.

COMON partners with the Chief Nurse in development and updating of the *Nursing Agenda for Michigan*, the strategic plan to address the nursing shortage. COMON has approved and supported the NPF revision since it was first proposed in 2006. Please listen to all the nursing voices in Michigan, and introduce legislation to modernize and improve the Nurse Professional Fund. The members of COMON urge you to bring this item forward in the Appropriations hearings, and thank you for your advocacy.

Thank you for listening to the voices of the 40 nursing organizations of COMON. If we can be a resource for you as you move forward, please contact us at the COMON office [E. Beane, 517-324-8373 or 8301, ebeane@mphi.org] or Dee Tyler, 248-914-0808.

Sincerely,



Dee Tyler, RN, COHN-S, FAAOHN, Chair, Coalition of Michigan Organizations of Nursing

Coalition of Michigan Organizations of Nursing (COMON) – Member Organizations

- 1 Academy of Medical Surgical Nurses Greater SE Michigan Chapter
- 2 American Association of Critical Care Nurses SE Michigan Chapter
- 3 American College of Nurse Midwives Region IV Chapter 7
- 4 American Nephrology Nurses Association
- 5 Association of Rehabilitation Nurses of Michigan
- 6 Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
- 7 Detroit Black Nurses Association, Inc.
- 8 Emergency Nurses Association (Michigan Council)
- 9 Far Eastern and American Nurses Association
- 10 Lambda Chi Chapter Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc. Professional Nursing Organization
- 11 Lansing Community College Nursing Careers Program
- 12 Maternal Newborn Nurse Professionals of Michigan
- 13 Metro Detroit Oncology Nursing Society
- 14 Health Department Nurse Administrators Forum
- 15 Michigan Association of Colleges of Nursing
- 16 Michigan Association of Nurse Anesthetists
- 17 Association of Occupational Health Professionals - Michigan Chapter
- 18 Michigan Association of Occupational Health Nurses
- 19 Michigan Association of Peri-Anesthesia Nurses
- 20 Michigan Association of School Nurses
- 21 Michigan Board of Nursing
- 22 Michigan Center for Nursing
- 23 Michigan Council of Nurse Practitioners
- 24 Michigan Council of Nursing Education Administrators
- 25 Michigan Council of periOperative Registered Nurses
- 26 Michigan Department of Community Health, Office of the Chief Nurse Executive
- 27 Michigan League for Nursing
- 28 Michigan Licensed Practical Nurses Association
- 29 Michigan Nurses Association
- 30 Michigan Nursing Students Association
- 31 Michigan Organization of Nurse Executives
- 32 Michigan Public Health Association - Public Health Nursing Section
- 33 Michigan Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates
- 34 National American Arab Nurses Association
- 35 National Association for Directors of Nursing in Long Term Care Michigan Chapter
- 36 National Association of Hispanic Nurses
- 37 National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, Michigan Chapter
- 38 Philippine Nurses Association of Michigan
- 39 Registered Nurses Association In Michigan
- 40 West Michigan Nursing Advisory Council

NRPP 1.2: Nurse Professional Fund – Utilization and Fee

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Public Health Code be changed to meet the current and future priorities and needs of the profession of nursing through increased flexibility in the utilization of the Nurse Professional Fund (NPF) and increased funding of the NPF.

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) - Task Force on Nursing Regulation recommends support of *The Nursing Agenda for Michigan*, the nursing strategic plan to address current and future needs, particularly those related to the nursing shortage expected to continue through 2030. Innovative efforts must be made to retain our nursing workforce, improve the working environment for nurses, and educate increasing numbers of new nurses. The Nurse Professional Fund (NPF) is an appropriate source of funding for piloting, evaluating, and leveraging such efforts, but Section 16315(9) of the Public Health Code strongly constrains utilization of the NPF. Flexibility in NPF utilization must be increased and the amount allocated to this fund from the annual nursing licensure fee must be increased to support needs. Michigan's nursing licensure fee is among the lowest in the country at \$24 per year. The average nursing licensure fee for other Great Lakes states is \$52 per year; California's fee is \$85 per year, and New York's fee is \$65 per year. The NPF currently is allocated \$2 of the \$24 annual licensure fee. Raising the annual licensure fee to \$32 and increasing the NPF annual allocation to \$10 will support the new focus of the NPF: – meeting current and future needs to advance the profession of nursing and assure a continuous future supply of high quality nurses for Michigan. Since nurses are the only contributors to the NPF (through license fees and voluntary contributions) it is appropriate that the Michigan Board of Nursing -- in consultation with the Office of the Chief Nurse Executive, the Michigan Center for Nursing, and other nursing stakeholder groups – annually advise the MDCH Director on priorities for allocation of NPF funds.

Approved by the MDCH - Task Force on Nursing Regulation, February 1, 2008

Submitted to the Director of the Michigan Department of Community Health, February 13, 2008

Background

Michigan's strategic plan for dealing with the nursing shortage, *The Nursing Agenda for Michigan*, includes action steps to strengthen the nursing profession and workforce through changes in nursing education and credentials, enhanced standards of practice, and appropriate regulation. The MDCH convened the Task Force on Nursing Regulation (TFNR) in September 2007 to make recommendations to the Director of MDCH regarding needed changes in statutes, rules, and policies in order to improve the education of nurses and the practice of nursing in Michigan, thereby protecting the health and safety of Michigan residents. The TFNR was composed of professional nurses, including representatives of the Michigan State Board of Nursing, nursing education programs, professional nursing practice organizations, experts in nurse credentialing and regulation, plus other stakeholders. The TFNR met from September through December 2007, and identified the issue of adequate funding and a more flexible spending plan for the Nurse Professional Fund (NPF) as high priority and amenable to a straightforward solution. The priorities and needs of nurses and the nursing profession have changed since the NPF was established in 1989, and more utilization flexibility and more funding are needed.

Nursing Regulatory Issue

The Nurse Professional Fund (NPF) was created by statute in 1989 at the suggestion and with the support of the Michigan nursing community. The purpose of the NPF was to provide support for nursing scholarships, nursing continuing education, and research and development to advance the nursing profession. The NPF is established in the state treasury as a restricted fund. Two dollars of each annual

nursing licensure fee is placed in this fund (\$4 of the \$48 two-year licensure fee for each nurse renewing). The priorities and needs of nurses and the nursing profession have changed over the past seventeen years and more utilization flexibility and funding are needed. Michigan now has a Nursing Strategic Plan (*The Nursing Agenda for Michigan*) that addresses current and future needs, particularly those related to the nursing shortage expected to continue through 2030. For example, innovative efforts must be made to retain our nursing workforce and improve the working environment for nurses. The NPF is an appropriate source of funding for piloting, evaluating, and leveraging such efforts, but the current statute strongly constrains utilization and funding. Michigan's nursing licensure fee is among the lowest in the country at \$24 per year, and only \$2 of that licensure fee is allocated to the NPF. The average nursing licensure fee for other Great Lakes states is \$52 per year; California's fee is \$85 per year, and New York's fee is \$65 per year.

Recommended Solution and Rationale for the Solution

- A. It is recommended that the Public Health Code language regarding the purposes and utilization of the Nurse Professional Fund be revised to allow greater flexibility in line with current and emerging needs of the nursing profession. Section 16315(9) of the Public Health Code should be changed to read (changes underlined): “The department of community health shall use the nurse professional fund (NPF) each fiscal year to support projects and initiatives that advance the profession of nursing (for example, special projects and activities of the Michigan Board of Nursing) and assure a continuous supply of high quality nurses for Michigan (for example, nursing education and workforce projects, data collection and evaluation with respect to nursing education and workforce strategies, leveraging of NPF resources through foundation grants and partnerships, Office of the Chief Nurse Executive, Michigan Center for Nursing, and targeted nursing scholarships). The Michigan State Board of Nursing shall consult with the Office of the Chief Nurse Executive, the Michigan Center for Nursing, and other nursing stakeholder groups and then annually advise the department as to priorities for allocation of NPF resources.”
- B. It is further recommended that the amount of the nursing licensure fee be increased by \$8/year (from \$24/yr to \$32/yr) and that the increase plus the current \$2/yr be allocated to the Nurse Professional Fund. The two-year licensure fee is to be raised from \$48 (\$24x2) to \$64 (\$32x2); the current \$4 (\$2x2) amount earmarked for the NPF would be maintained and \$16 (\$8x2) would be added, for a total of \$20 [(\$2x2)+(\$8x2)] allocated to the NPF for each 2-year nursing license renewed (see p. 192 of *Occupational Regulation Sections of the Michigan Public Health Code*, MDCH Bureau of Health Professions, 2007). Section 16315(6) of the Public Health Code should be changed to read (changes underlined): “The nurse professional fund is established in the state treasury. Of the money that is attributable to per-year license fees collected under section 16327, the state treasurer shall credit \$10.00 of each individual annual license fee collected to the nurse professional fund. The money in the nurse professional fund shall be expended only as provided in subsection (9).”
- C. It is further recommended that the MDCH Bureau of Health Professions change the nursing licensure renewal form to include an explanation of the Nurse Professional Fund, and a check-off box and amount line for nurses' voluntary gifts to the NPF.

The NPF contributions of Michigan nurses should be utilized in ways that reflect current and future needs, addressing the most important nursing issues of the time. The *Nursing Agenda for Michigan* is a blueprint that can help guide the best use of NPF funds. For example, the most pressing needs today are related to the education of more nursing faculty (addressed in the Governor's proposal for the Michigan Nursing Corps) and strategies to retain our current nursing workforce as well as new nurses entering practice. More general language for the purpose and utilization of the NPF will provide flexibility to address high priority nursing issues as needs and circumstances change (example: nursing scholarships are not currently a major issue, but retention of nursing students is a problem requiring innovative solutions). The

amount currently earmarked for the NPF is \$2 per year per nurse. Raising the nursing licensure fee and the amount allocated to the NPF will provide the funding needed to significantly impact the issues that are important to nurses and to the health and safety of Michigan's people; for these same reasons, some nurses may wish to make voluntary gifts to the NPF. Since nurses are the only contributors to the NPF (through license fees and voluntary contributions) it is appropriate that the Michigan State Board of Nursing consult with the Office of the Chief Nurse Executive, the Michigan Center for Nursing, and other nursing stakeholder groups and then advise the Director of MDCH annually as to NPF allocation priorities.

Supporting References

RWJF News Digest: Nursing, 9-7-2007: *Challenge of Retaining Newly Licensed RNs*; ... "the 13 percent who left their positions within the first year cited poor management and stressful working conditions as the top reasons for their departure." (newsdigest@rwjf.org)

The Nursing Agenda for Michigan, Issue 1.1.1: Retention of new nurses requires that upper & mid-level nursing managers receive education in leadership, mentorship, and modern management skills.

The Nursing Agenda for Michigan, Issue 1.1.2: Nursing retention requires that new graduates receive worksite education and mentoring.

List of Nursing Licensure Charges, MDCH Bureau of Health Professions. 2007.

List of State Centers for Nursing Funded/Not Funded by License Fees, MDCH Bureau of Health Professions, 2007.

Nurse Professional Fund Fee Change: Coalition of Michigan Organizations of Nursing, 2006.

HB 4591 of 2007. Education; teachers; teacher certification fees; revise, and implement fees for teacher college review. Amends sections 1538 & 1539 of 1976 PA 451 (MCL 380.1538 & 380.1539) & adds section 1538a.

12/9/09